

~~4. (Twice Amended) A process according to claim 3, wherein the alkali treatment is a strong-alkali treatment and the process further comprises treating the acrylic acid with an excess of an alkali metal hydroxide.~~

Sub
CC2
8. (Twice Amended) A process for producing a water-absorbent resin, which comprises the step of polymerizing at least one component including acrylic acid and/or its salt as major components to produce a water-absorbent resin that is a neutralized salt, wherein the acrylic acid used as a raw material is a product being obtained by catalytic gas phase oxidation of propylene and/or propane and the acrylic acid contains not less than 10 ppm of an aldehyde, and further comprising the step of subjecting the raw acrylic acid to a strong-alkali treatment with alkali metal hydroxides followed by the polymerization step.

Please add claims 10-14 as follows.

10. (New) A process according to claim 8, wherein the strong-alkali treatment comprises treating the raw acrylic acid with a molar excess of said strong alkali.

11. (New) A process according to claim 1, further comprising distilling the acrylic acid in the presence of an aldehyde-treating agent to purify the acrylic acid.

C4
Sub
CC3
12. (New) A process according to claim 1, wherein the aldehyde-treating agent is a hydrazine compound.

13. (New) A process according to claim 1, wherein the resultant water-absorbent resin has a liquid permeation quantity of not less than 100 g/g under a load of 0.3 psi over 10 minutes.

Marked-up Claims:

1. (Twice Amended) A process for producing a water-absorbent resin, which comprises the step of polymerizing at least one monomer component including acrylic acid and/or its salt as major components to produce a water-absorbent resin that is a neutralized salt, [with the process being characterized in that] wherein the acrylic acid is a product obtained by catalytic gas phase oxidation of propylene and/or propane and where the acrylic acid has a protoanemonin content [of] that is reduced to not more than 10 ppm, and in that the resultant water-absorbent resin has a neutralization of not less than 50 mol%.

4. (Twice Amended) A process according to according to claim [1] 3, wherein the alkali treatment is a strong-alkali treatment [such that the resultant neutralization ratio of the acrylic acid will be more than 100 mol%] and the process further comprises treating the acrylic acid with an excess of an alkali metal hydroxide.

8. (Twice Amended) A process for producing a water-absorbent resin, which comprises the step of polymerizing at least one component including acrylic acid and/or its salt as major components to produce a water-absorbent resin that is a neutralized salt, [with the process being characterized in that] wherein the acrylic acid used as a raw material is a product being obtained by catalytic gas phase oxidation of propylene and/or propane and [containing] the acrylic acid contains not less than 10 ppm of an aldehyde, and [further characterized by] further comprising the step of subjecting the raw acrylic acid to a strong-alkali treatment with alkali metal hydroxides followed by the polymerization step.